

without using a phase signal from the alternator, including generating a phase signal from the control unit that is adapted to be processed by the voltage regulator.

12. (Canceled)

13. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1211, wherein detecting variables comprises receiving engine performance signals directly from at least one sensor associated with the thermal engine.

14.-19. (Canceled)

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 11, and 13 are presented for further examination. Claims 1, 4, 11, and 13 have been amended. Claims 3 and 12 have now been canceled.

In the Office Action mailed April 15, 2004, the Examiner found claims 3, 4, 12, and 13 to be allowable if rewritten into independent form. Claims 1, 2, 7, and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Maruyama et al. in view of Kohl et al., Swanson et al., and Microelectronic Circuits book by Sedra/Smith. Claims 5 and 8 were rejected as obvious over these references and further in view of Iwatani et al.

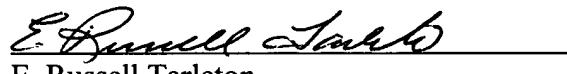
Applicants have amended the claims so that the limitations of claim 3 are now included in claim 1. Hence, claim 1 is now allowable claim 3 rewritten into independent form. Applicants submit that claim 1 as well as dependent claims 2, 4, 5, 7, and 8 are now in condition for allowance.

Claim 11 has been rewritten to include the limitations of allowable claim 12. Hence, claim 11 is now claim 12 rewritten into independent form. Applicants respectfully submit that claim 11 and dependent claim 13 are now clearly allowable.

In the event the Examiner finds informalities that can be resolved by telephone conference, the Examiner is requested to contact applicants' undersigned representative by telephone at (206) 622-4900 in order to expeditiously resolve prosecution of this application. Consequently, early and favorable action allowing these claims and passing this case issuance is respectfully solicited.

The Director is authorized to charge any additional fees due by way of this Amendment, or credit any overpayment, to our Deposit Account No. 19-1090.

Respectfully submitted,
SEED Intellectual Property Law Group PLLC


E. Russell Tarleton
Registration No. 31,800

ERT:alb

Enclosure:
Postcard

701 Fifth Avenue, Suite 6300
Seattle, Washington 98104-7092
Phone: (206) 622-4900
Fax: (206) 682-6031

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